

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DJIBOU 00751 201342Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 MCT-01 AID-05

ACDA-12 /115 W

-----105939 201348Z /40

P R 200615Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 492

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 0751

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ASEC, DJ, ET

SUBJ: DJIBOUTI AUTHORITIES HAVE CAUGHT MOST TERRORISTS

INVOLVED IN "PALMIER EN ZINC" ATTACK

REF: DJIBOUTI 0732

1. LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT ANNOUNCED RESULTS OF INTENSIVE EFFORTS UNCOVER AUTHORS OF THIS PAST THURSDAY'S BLOODY ATTACK ON "PALMIER EN ZINC" RESTAURANT. NEVERHTELESS, RELIABLE SOURCE REVEALED TO EMBASSY THAT GROUP INVOLVED CONSITED OF SEVEN YOUNG AFARS. FIVE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS HAVE
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REPORTEDLY BEEN APPREHENDED INCLUDING DRIVER OF CAR AND INDIVIDUAL WHO FURNISHED THE TWO GRENADES USED IN ATTACK. ONLY TWO MEMBERS OF GROUP LACKING ARE THE ACTUAL GRENADE THROWERS. IT IS BELIEVED THHAT THEY WILL SOON BE TAKEN IN.

2. FIRST REPORTS FROM THIS GROUP DO NOT INDICATE TIES TO ANY WELL-KNOWN DJIBOUTI POLITICAL FIGURE. ALTHOUGH ALL

SEVEN ARE DESCRIBED AS MINOR EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVT, INCLUDING ONE WORKING IN THE JUSTICE DEPT, THEIR ORGANIZATION APPEARS SMALL. REPORTEDLY, SOME DOCUMENTS WERE LOCATED INDICATING THE EVENTUAL EMPLACEMENT OF A LARGER TERRORIST ORGANIZATION THROUGHOUT THE CITY. THE DECISION TO MOUNT THE ATTACK ON 16 DEC WAS NOT TAKEN UNTIL AFTER THE GROUP HAD SPENT THE AFTERNOON CHEWING KHAT, A NARCOTIC LEAF, IN ORDER TO BUILD UP THEIR COURAGE. THE GROUP THEN DROVE AROUND THE CITY FROM SEVEN UNTIL NINE P.M. BEFORE DECIDING ON THE "PALMIER EN ZINC" BECAUSE IT HAD THE LARGEST TERRACE AND THE MOST PEOPLE PRESENT.

3. ANOTHER POSSIBLE ANGLE TO THE ATTACK WAS PROVIDED THE EMBASSY BY THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR. HE REPORTED THAT DURING THE NIGHT OF 16-17 DEC, ONE OF THE FRENCH TECHNICAL EXPERTS WORKING WITH THE DJIBOUTI GENDARMERIE DISCOVERED THAT A NUMBER OF RADIO ANTENNAE BELONGING TO THE GENDARMERIE HAD FALLEN DOWN. HE WORKED UNTIL FOUR IN THE MORNING PUTTING THE ANTENNAE BACK INTO PLACE. HE REMARKED TO HIS C.O. THE NEXT DAY THAT STRANGE HAPPENING HAD TAKEN PLACE THE PREVIOUS DAY -- THAT HE FOUND OVER HALF OF THE ANTENNAE DOWN THE SAME DAY. THE TECHNICIAN REMARKED THAT HE HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE. THE FRENCH MILITARY QUICKLY
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PASSED ON THE WORD OF OBVIOUS SABOTAGE TO THE AMBASSADOR WHO HAS NOT YET INFORMED THE DJIBOUTI GOVT, NOT WANTING TO ADD FUEL TO THE FLAMES OF ILL FEELING NOW AFFECTING AFAR/ISS A RELATIONS.

4. THE GENDARMERIE IS THE ONLY ORGANIZATION IN THE DJIBOUTI GOVT WHICH HAS A PREPONDERANCE OF AFARS. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER THE ANTENNAE WERE SABOTAGED PRIOR TO THE BOMBING IN THE NIGHTCLUB OR AFTER THE ARMY MOVED TROOPS AROUND THE AFAR TOWNSHIPS. IN ANY CASE, IT IS A RATHER BRACING THOUGHT TO IMAGINE THAT THE GENDARMERIE, WHICH IS BETTER TRAINED AND AS WELL ARMED AS THE ARMY, MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A SOMEWHAT LARGER PLOT.
CLARKE

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Sent Date: 20-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
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